

Reference:	FOI.20071.26
Subject:	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Date of Request:	1 April 2026

Requested:

Autism diagnoses

1. For each calendar year 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, and 1 January 2026 to 31 March 2026, please provide the total number of children (under 18) who received a confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) during that period.

Please present the figures broken down by calendar year.

Autism referrals (demand)

2. For each calendar year 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, and 1 January 2026 to 31 March 2026, please provide the total number of new referrals received for an autism diagnostic assessment for children (under 18 years of age).

Please present the figures broken down by calendar year.

Autism assessment waiting times

3. As of 31 March 2026, please provide:
 - a. Number of children (under 18) waiting for an autism diagnostic assessment.
 - b. The mean and median waiting time (in weeks) from referral to diagnosis/assessment completion for children (under 18).
 - c. The longest waiting time (in weeks) recorded in the last 5 years (since 2022) from referral to diagnosis/assessment completion for children (under 18), based on completed cases.

Please provide the information in Excel/spreadsheet format.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information requested for question 1 of your request, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The “appropriate limit” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

To identify how many children and young people (CYP) under eighteen (18) years of age that received a confirmed diagnosis of ASD, the UHB would need to undertake a trawl of all patients that underwent an ASD assessment during the time period requested, as it is not recorded centrally.

The UHB has identified that four hundred and twenty-seven (427) CYP were assessed for ASD during the period 1 January to 31 March 2026. It is estimated that a manual search of these records alone would exceed the 18 hours stipulated within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA).

Based on the number of records identified, conducting a search, taking a minimum of five (5) minutes per record, would exceed the 'appropriate limit', costing the UHB the following:

427 @ 5 minutes per record = 35 hours and 27 minutes

35 hours and 27 minutes @ £25 per hour = £886.25

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA, which provides an exemption from a public authority's obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

However, under Section 16 of the FoIA, we are required as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable to individuals who have made a request under the FoIA, this can include assisting a requestor to further refine their request.

The UHB suggests that you may refine your request by reducing the timeframe requested to a one (1) month period e.g. January 2026. However, the UHB would still be required to undertake a manual trawl of all CYP ASD assessments undertaken to identify the information required to fulfil your request, therefore, the outcome would be dependent on the number of records identified within a shorter time period.

The UHB provides the accessible information it holds in the attached spreadsheet, as requested, at Attachment 1.